

# Multi-County Goods Movement Action Plan

## Ventura County Action Plan



**Metro**



Prepared for:

**Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
California Department of Transportation  
Orange County Transportation Authority  
Riverside County Transportation Commission  
San Bernardino Associated Governments  
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## **Introduction**

### **Purpose**

This report outlines a Goods Movement Action Plan for Ventura County, California, part of a broader Multi-County Goods Movement Action Plan (MCGMAP) developed collectively by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG), San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC), Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans).

The MCGMAP contains strategies to support the efficient movement of goods without disproportionately impacting local communities, the environment, or the transportation network. The MCGMAP is also a regional framework for goods movement initiatives.

This report examines the key issues that impact Ventura County from a goods movement standpoint. It examines the plans and proposals that are being pursued to resolve stated issues, and new specific actions and strategies that could become a focus for the county. The report builds on a large body of work that has been researched and developed over the past few years.

The Multi-County Goods Movement Action Plan has recommended four primary action sets for goods movement within the region. The action sets are:

- ◆ Action Set 1: Accelerate Regional Environmental Mitigation
- ◆ Action Set 2: Relieve Congestion and Increase Mobility
- ◆ Action Set 3: Improve Operational Efficiency
- ◆ Action Set 4: Develop Equitable Public/ Private Funding Strategy

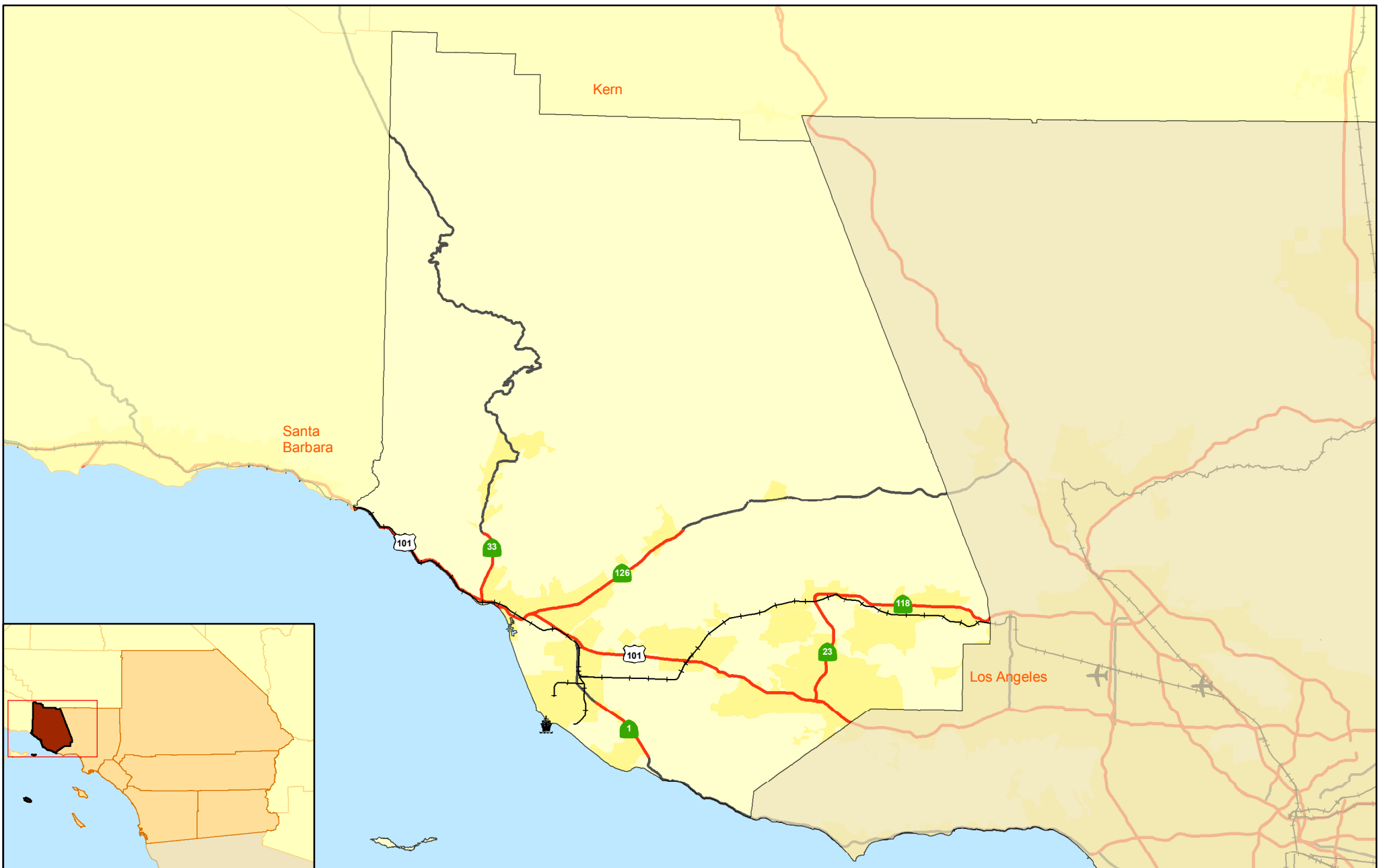
Current and future projects, relationships, and activities of Ventura County address these four primary action sets. The document concludes with an explanation of how the county's activities support these four action sets.

### **Background**

The county has been an integral part of mobility in the region since the urban areas surrounding Los Angeles and Orange Counties have coalesced. Ventura County has participated in the following goods movement related studies:

- ◆ Compendium of Truck and Freight Information for the Greater L.A. Metropolitan Area, December 2004
- ◆ Port of Hueneme Access Study, December 2000

A map of Ventura County, with essential goods movement related features, is provided in Figure 1. Ventura is on the far west side of the study region. The east border with Los Angeles County is the only border with other MCGMAP Counties. The major source of outside freight is the Port of Hueneme. The Port of Hueneme is located in the city of Port Hueneme which is surrounded by the city of Oxnard.



- ✈ Airports
- ⚓ Ports
- +— Railroad
- Freeways
- Highway
- Urban Areas

## Multi-County Goods Movement Action Plan Ventura County

0 10 20 40 Miles



Sources:  
StreetMap 2006

**Figure 1**

There is a Union Pacific (UP) rail line that traverses Ventura County with the western end on the coast and the eastern end in Simi Valley. The UP rail line is connected to the port via the Ventura County Railway (VCRR).

US-101 is the only limited access highway that traverses the entire county. The additional limited access highways in the county are SR-126, SR-118, SR-23, SR-1 and SR-33.

## **Role**

### ***Ports/Airports***

As the only deepwater port between Los Angeles and San Francisco, the Port of Hueneme is an important center for freight activity for Ventura County and the MCGMAP Region. From a regional perspective, Ventura County's primary role in goods movement is through the Port of Hueneme. The port handled over one million metric revenue tons (MRT) of cargo in 2003. Furthermore, projections indicate that by 2010, MRT will increase by as much as 50 percent totaling between 1.4 and 1.5 MRT<sup>1</sup>. As shown in Table 1, the port's principal commodities include automobiles, bananas, wood pulp, fresh fruit, general cargo, offshore oil support, and fish.

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<sup>1</sup> Phone conversation with Anthony Taormina, Port of Hueneme, May 17, 2007

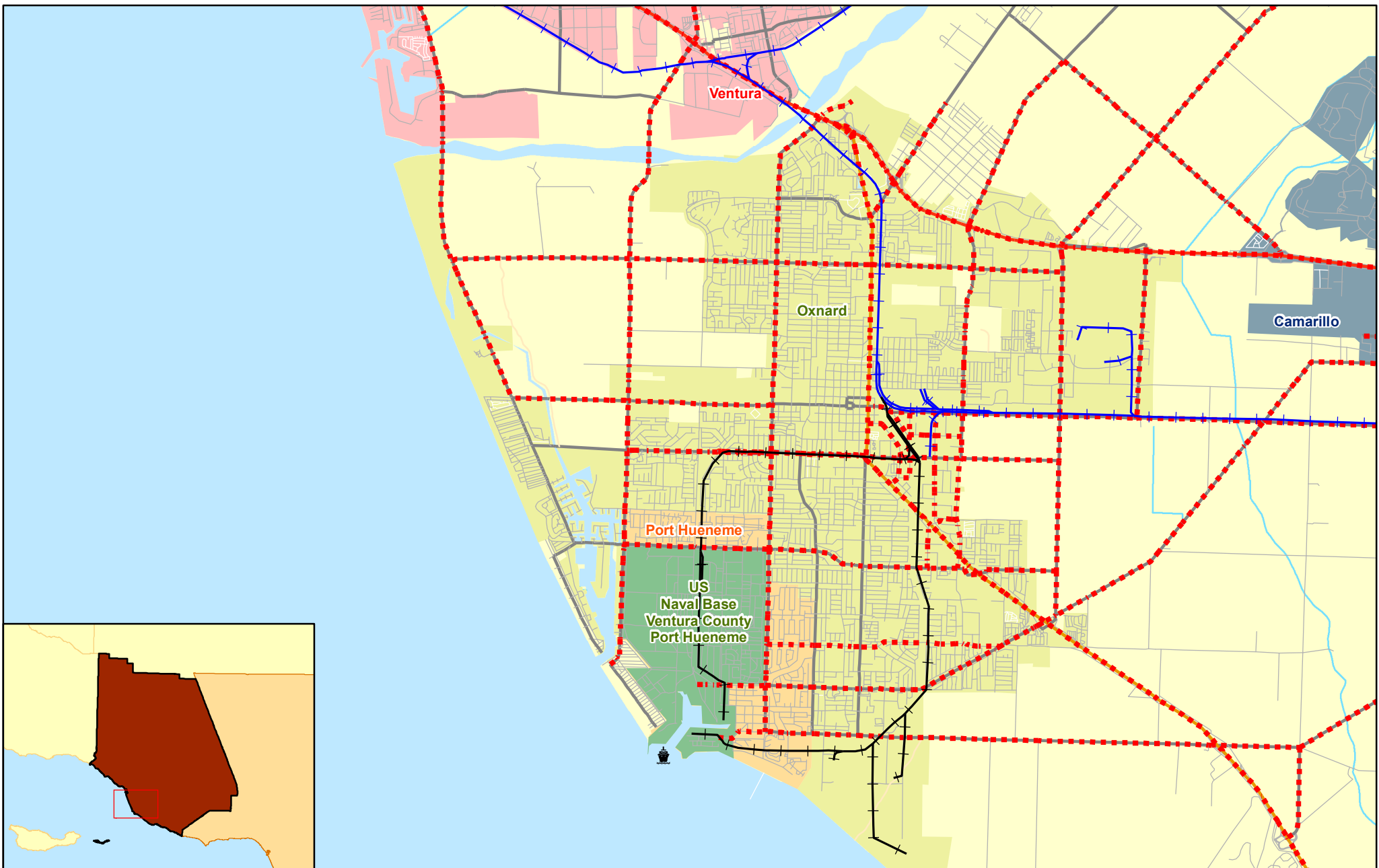
**Table 1**  
**Port of Hueneme Cargo Volumes 2002 and 2003**  
**(Metric Revenue Tons)**

<b>Cargo Type</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Automobiles	235,102	219,170
Bananas	395,157	434,092
Wood Pulp	39,200	35,500
Fresh Fruit	116,929	144,506
General Cargo	98,050	159,354
Offshore Oil	79,763	88,689
Fish	23,660	14,177
Total	987,861	1,095,488

Source: Port of Hueneme, Naval Base Ventura County: Strategic Commercial Development Plan, December 1, 2003

Cargo types handled by the port are predominantly fresh fruit and automobiles, which combined equal 72 percent of all MRT handled in 2003. Handling over 2.19 MRT of automobiles in 2003, the Port of Hueneme is a notable load center for the import and export of automobiles.

Goods movement through the port is aided by both truck and rail capacity within the city of Oxnard. The following paragraphs describe each primary rail line as well as the major local and intercity truck routes. The locations of these facilities in conjunction to the port can be seen in Figure 2.



# Multi-County Goods Movement Action Plan Port of Hueneme Vicinity

- Truck Route
- Limited Access
- Highway
- Major Road
- Ports
- Airports
- UP
- VCRR

0 1 2 4 Miles



Sources:  
StreetMap 2006  
City of Oxnard

Figure 2



***Rail*****Ventura County Railway**

Rail capacity immediate to the vicinity of the port consists of an approximate 10.3 mile loop of Ventura County Railway (VCRR) track. The track and rail property is owned, dispatched, and maintained by the port. This line transfers freight from the Port of Hueneme and connects to the UP Coast Mainline in downtown Oxnard, making it of particular importance to the customers of the port. The railway has a total of 20 at-grade crossings within Oxnard<sup>2</sup>.

**Union Pacific Railroad**

The UP Coast Mainline serves as a connection between the city of Oxnard and all major west coast destinations. As the only intercity freight rail provider in the city, this line provides an important link for the delivery of goods out of Oxnard. There are currently 24 passenger trains per day on Ventura County rails. Of these, 16 are Metrolink and eight are Amtrak. In total, eight to 24 freight trains per day utilize this line. The line has 10 at-grade crossings which can significantly delay the flow of traffic in Oxnard<sup>3</sup>.

**Santa Paula Branch Line**

The Santa Paula Branch Line is owned and operated by the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC). The line primarily serves passengers and has limited freight service. The Santa Paula Branch Line is accessible by the UP Coast Mainline, making it ultimately accessible to the Port of Hueneme.

***Trucks***

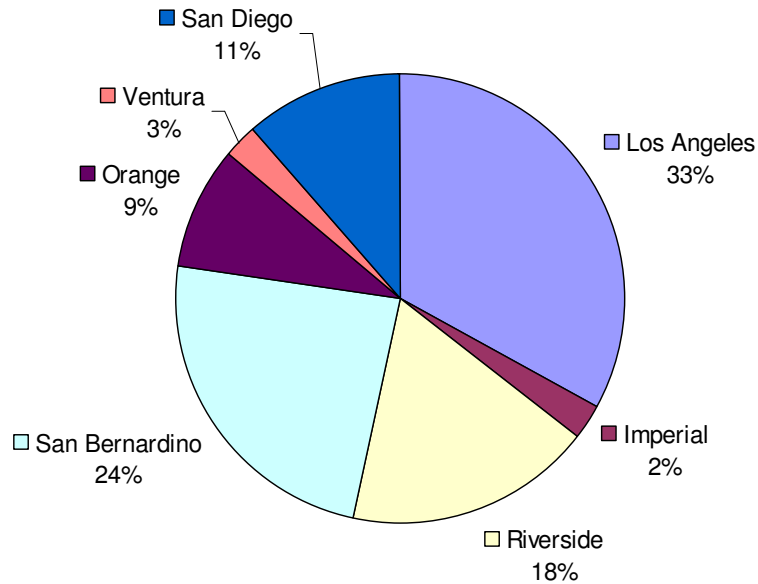
Figure 3 shows the distribution of truck traffic in the region by county, measured in terms of truck miles of travel on the state highway system. Ventura County accounts for 3 percent of the total regional truck miles of travel, which is the second lowest among the studied counties, while Imperial County is lower at 2 percent.

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<sup>2</sup> Goods Movement, Oxnard General Plan Update 2020, p 22

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

**Figure 3**  
**2003 Percentage of Truck VMT in the MCGMAP Study Area by County**



Source: Truck Miles of Travel: California State Highway System 1988-2003, Caltrans 2005.

A number of truck routes serve the port. In recent years, the port has seen a shift in goods movement from rail to the trucking industry<sup>4</sup>.

Factors contributing to this shift include the deregulation of rail and shipping industries, and the completion of major highway networks. To accommodate the increase in trucking demands, the following primary trucking routes with direct connection to the port have been established as shown in the previous Figure 2.

- ◆ Victoria Ave.
- ◆ Hueneme Rd.
- ◆ Rice Ave.
- ◆ Pleasant Valley Rd.
- ◆ Bard Rd.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

Major regional truck routes along US-101 and SR-126 connect with these local truck routes. Additionally, sand and gravel trucks utilize SR-118. The use of SR-118 to bypass weigh stations on US-101 has led to the consideration of a new truck weigh station on SR-118. Figure 4 shows the locations of the existing and proposed Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Facilities (CVEF) in Ventura County. It also shows Truck ADT on the freeways.

The high volume of trucks on the limited access portion of SR-118 and the low volume on SR-23 suggest that the trucks are using a route that does not require passing through the existing CVEF to the west of SR-23. This means that the non-limited access portion of SR-118 is being used to move freight. The location of the proposed CVEF on SR-118, west of the SR-118/SR-23 junction, would process trucks using this route.

### ***Warehousing***

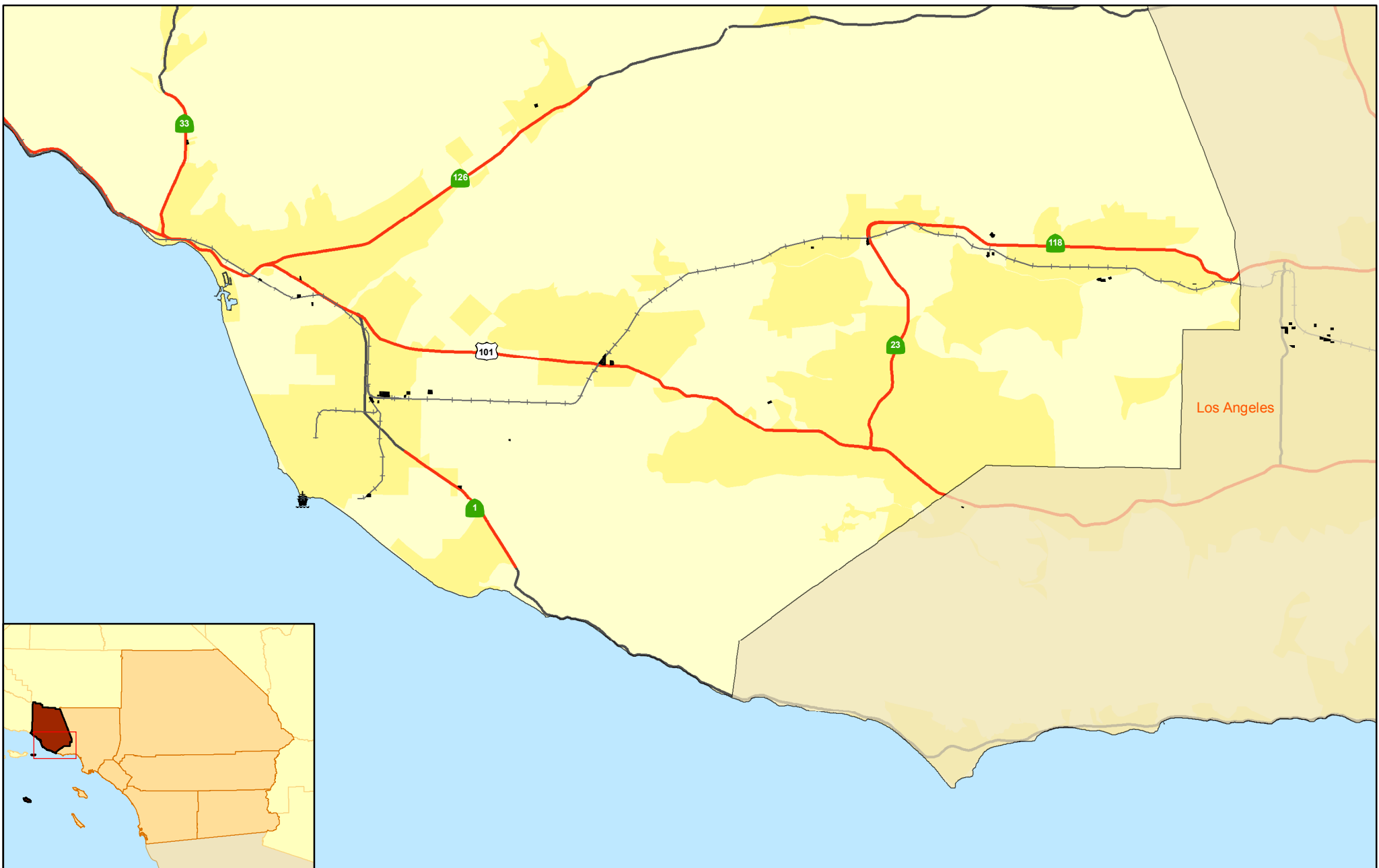
Compared to other counties within the MCGMAP region, there are limited warehouse and distribution facilities in Ventura County. Figure 5 portrays land classified as warehousing and wholesaling.



- less than 5000
- 5000 - 10000
- 10000 - 15000
- 15000 - 20000
- greater than 20000
- Urban Areas
- ⚓ Ports
- ✈ Airports
- ◆ Existing CVEF
- ◆ Proposed CVEF
- Other Freeways
- SR-118

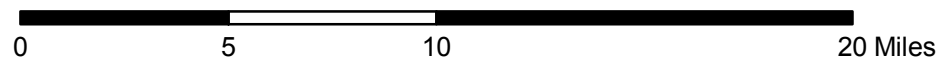
# **Multi-County Goods Movement Action Plan** **2003 Truck ADT and** **Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Facilities**

0 10 20 40 Miles



- Airports
- Ports
- Railroad
- Freeways
- Highway
- Urban Areas

# Multi-County Goods Movement Action Plan Warehouse Land Use



Sources:  
StreetMap 2006  
SCAG 2000 Land Use

**Figure 5**

Warehousing is limited due to the focus on agricultural land uses in the county and relatively high housing costs for workers. Similar to Orange and San Diego Counties, most warehouse facilities in Ventura County are private and contract to warehouse and distribution centers. Warehouse facilities are typically less than 50,000 square feet. Overall, the market is relatively stable with a slight decline in vacancy levels and a moderate increase in available space.

## **County Specific Issues**

### **Mainline Rail Capacity**

Rail throughout the county is single track, thus limiting the movement of passengers and freight. There are no funded projects that address this issue or the potential to enhance movement by double tracking rails. The specific county projects that relate to rail include the Santa Paula Branch Line and grade separations between the non-limited access portion of SR-118 and the UP rail line.

The Santa Paula Branch Line is on the MCGMAP project list, and a planning study is currently being conducted. If constructed, the line would bring freight and passenger trains through the Santa Clara River Valley, carry goods from the Port of Hueneme, and bring commuters to Valencia's office parks. Amtrak may also be rerouted through Santa Clarita via this branch line.

The line would traverse a historic branch line through the valley. Some track exists but would need to be upgraded. The line would run through Santa Paula and Fillmore and link with the rail lines in Santa Clarita on the northern edge of the urban area of Los Angeles. This project would allow freight trains to avoid the Los Angeles corridor en route to national rail networks.

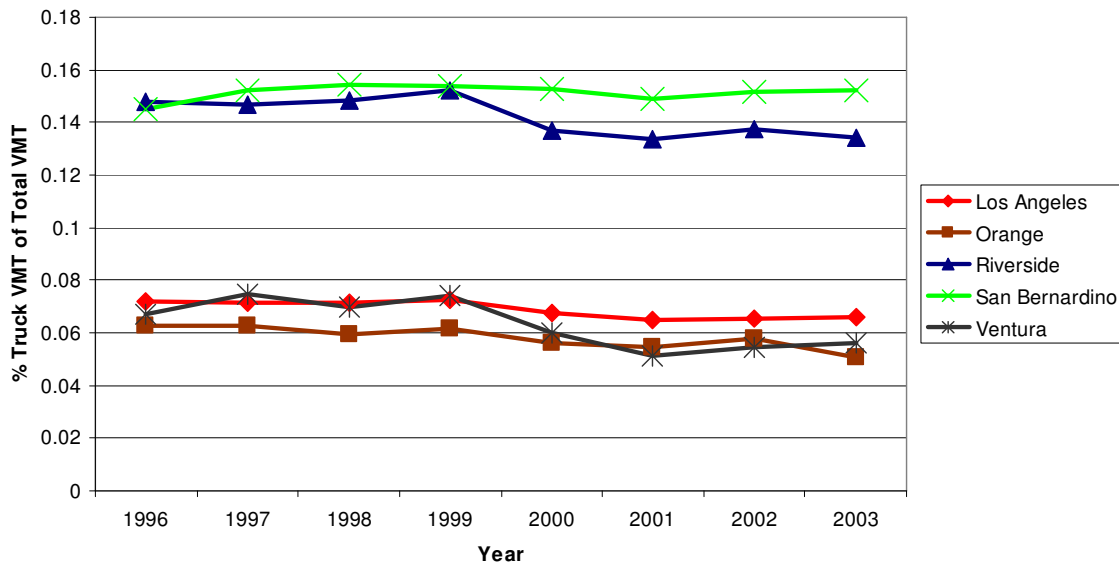
The other specific rail issue in the county is the need to grade separate SR-118 and the UP rail line. This project is not listed on the MCGMAP Project List because it is funded and listed in the 2004 RTIP Grade Separation Projects List. This grade separation will positively impact local congestion in addition to improving safety.

### **Roadways**

A survey conducted earlier in the MCGMAP determined that highway congestion is perceived as a problem in Ventura County. Traffic delays, truck traffic intrusions to neighborhoods, poor pavement conditions, and air pollution from trucks were indicated as important community concerns.

From a regional perspective, Ventura County has very low truck volumes. Figure 6 depicts the trends in percent of Truck VMT to Total VMT. The percentages are comparable to those of Los Angeles and Orange Counties. Even though Los Angeles County has over 10 times the truck VMT, the proportion of trucks sharing roadways is similar.

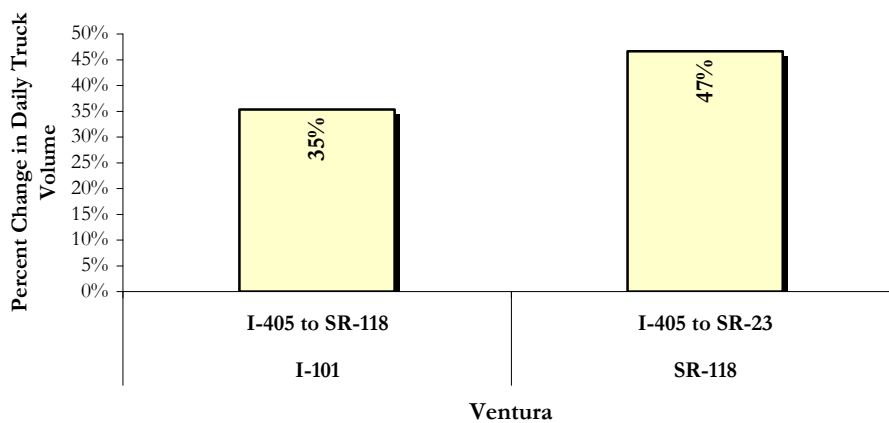
**Figure 6**  
**Percent of Truck VMT to Total VMT by County**



Source: Truck Miles of Travel: California State Highway System 1988-2003, Caltrans 2005.

Figure 7 shows growth of truck volumes on major freeways from 2003 through 2030. Although Ventura County has a low volume of trucks, the relative growth specific to trucks along these corridors is substantial.

**Figure 7**  
**Percent Growth in Truck Volumes from 2003 to 2030 on Major Corridors**



Source: SCAG 2007 Draft Air Quality Management Plan, Wilbur Smith Associates, 2006

Ventura County is pursuing an interchange improvement project on Rice Avenue. A “Mitigated Negative Declaration/Finding of No Significant Impact” was declared by FHWA based on a 2001 study for the “Rice Avenue/U.S. 101 Interchange Project” prepared for the city of Oxnard. The study determined the following:

“Existing high traffic volumes and the configuration of the existing interchange and over crossing contribute to deficient operating conditions, congestion, and vehicle delay. The northbound US-101 on- and off-ramps, which present safety concerns, were designed with tight radii, providing little room for vehicles, particularly truck traffic, to maneuver and decelerate. In addition, the horizontal curve of the over crossing restricts the sight distance for motorists. The on- and off-ramps are no longer able to accommodate increases in travel speeds and peak hour traffic volumes, resulting in substantial queuing at these ramps, particularly during peak hours.”

In addition to accommodating the projected growth in truck volumes, the Rice Avenue interchange improvement will facilitate goods movement from the port, thus providing increased mobility. This project was listed under proposition 1B which passed in the 2006 mid-term elections. However, complete funding has yet to be secured.

## **Funding**

Funding requirements for highway, port and railway improvements will require key partnerships between various public and private entities in order to be successful.

As freight demand at the Port of Hueneme continues to increase, capacity constraints will need to be addressed. Operational and intermodal facility improvements would help move goods faster and increase capacity; however, the port predicts that berth space will be a constraint. Expansion of the port and its capacity would require partnerships with the adjacent naval base.

Funding for railway improvements also provides opportunities for public-private partnerships to aid in the progress of goods movement throughout the county. One example would be through partnerships for project funding and usage agreements between public rail operators and track owners. Such a partnership would be the exchange of usage rights for funding of critical projects along rail lines. The VCTC has expressed interest in pursuing a similar partnership with the UP. If key public-private partnerships could be created throughout the county, critical rail improvements would be achieved sooner, expediting the forward progress of goods movement throughout the region.

Federal funding for major highway and rail projects will be essential for project development. Currently, \$350 million of federal funding is being pursued for the Santa Paula Branch Line, while the \$70 million Rice Avenue Interchange Improvement Project is \$26 million short on funding.



## County Actions

Goods movement issues within Ventura County are being addressed by a number of projects and actions. The Rice Avenue Interchange project is close to achieving additional funding.

Table 2 lists the projects, capital ventures, and actions that would assist in enhancing goods movement.

**Table 2**  
**MCGMAP Projects Ventura County**

Category	County	Description	Cost (\$Mill's)
Modification of Delivery Hours	All	Extend Delivery Hours to 24 hours	
Use of LCVs on Dedicated Facilities	All	Evaluate Use of LCVs on Dedicated Facilities	
Data and Analytical Methods	All	Improve demand forecasts for labor and equipment across all modes	
Data and Analytical Methods	All	Employ better trade and transportation forecasting	
Institutional Changes to Improve Feasibility of Large Scale/Mega Projects	All	Enact expanded public-private partnership legislation	
Institutional Changes to Improve Feasibility of Large Scale/Mega Projects	All	Enact design-build and design sequencing legislation	
Freight Corridor Capacity Enhancement and Operational Improvements	VEN	Reconstruct US 101/Rice Avenue IC	\$75.0
Grade Separations	VEN	Construct Rice Avenue/UP Grade Separation	\$45.0
Grade Separations	VEN	Construct Rose Avenue/UP Grade Separation	\$45.0
Grade Separations	VEN	SR-118/Coast Line – Construct Grade Separation	TBD
Mainline Rail Capacity Improvements	VEN	Port/rail intermodal access at Port of Hueneme	\$18.0
Mainline Rail Capacity Improvements	VEN	Santa Paula Branch Line from Santa Clarita to Port Hueneme	\$350.0
Construction of Additional Freeway Lanes/Capacity	VEN	Port Terminal - Hueneme Rd (Port to Los Pasos), Los Pasos (Hueneme to US 101)	
Construction of Additional Freeway Lanes/Capacity	VEN	Port Terminal - Ventura Rd (Hueneme to Channel Island), channel Island Blvd (Ventura to Victoria), Victoria Ave (Channel Island to US 101)	

Source: Wilbur Smith Associates, 2007

Capacity and operational improvements are needed for the port. These issues are the focus of action sets called out in the MCGMAP. Improvements to the Port of Hueneme not only provide regional goods movement relief, but address county specific issues and thus should be considered top tier projects. Trucking-related congestion and air quality concerns can be addressed if actions are taken to provide more direct ship to rail intermodal access and if trucking dwell times are reduced. However, it should be noted that the role of trucking in goods movement within Ventura County has grown over the years.

The community's perception of congestion and truck issues presents the largest discrepancy for Ventura County. These issues have no specific actions called out in the MCGMAP, yet surveys indicate these issues to be of significant concern. This discrepancy is supported by the fact that Ventura County only contributes 3 percent of total truck volumes throughout the study region. However, this does not diminish the perceived impacts of trucking, as Ventura County's total proportion of trucks to other vehicles is comparable to both Orange and Los Angeles Counties.

The proportion of trucks will increase. Projects such as the Rice Avenue Interchange are essential at the county level. Given the regional connectivity of goods movement in Southern California and the increasing coalescence between regions, such county specific issues would ultimately forward the progress of a regional goods movement system.

## **Conclusions**

There is a relationship between county projects and the recommended primary actions of the MCGMAP. The four action sets in the MCGMAP are:

- ◆ Action Set 1: Accelerate Regional Environmental Mitigation
- ◆ Action Set 2: Relieve Congestion and Increase Mobility
- ◆ Action Set 3: Improve Operational Efficiency
- ◆ Action Set 4: Develop Equitable Public/ Private Funding Strategy

**Action Set 1: Accelerate Regional Environmental Mitigation** seeks to mitigate environmental impacts at three levels; a broad regional approach, regional conformity, and project specific mitigation. The regional approach is for broad strategic policies and efforts focusing on further reducing region-wide impacts. Regional conformity holds emissions to caps set through aggressive actions and implementing high-level technology and best practices. The project specific mitigation requires project sponsors to consider and disclose environmental impacts when planning projects and to address how potential impacts will be resolved. This part of the project development process is specified in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The port and port vicinity improvements are linked to the broader regional MCGMAP initiative. In addition, planned actions around the port will improve mobility and in turn, reduce non-point source pollution and contribute to regional environmental mitigation. The projects may have local impacts

that are not addressed within this regional goods movement framework but the projects will need to meet CEQA/NEPA requirements.

**Action Set 2: Relieve Congestion and Increase Mobility** focuses on improving all aspects of the transportation system to improve region-wide mobility and safety. This action set seeks to achieve the following:

- ◆ Increase intermodal lift capacity
- ◆ Increase mainline rail capacity
- ◆ Grade separate railroad crossings
- ◆ Improve highways through comprehensive innovative approaches
- ◆ Continue with general purpose highway improvements/ safety and operational improvements

The mainline rail addition of the Santa Paula Branch, intermodal facilities at Port Hueneme, and highway improvements will provide congestion relief and increase mobility. All modes of freight transport stand to benefit from these projects.

The grade separation of the non-limited access portion of SR-118 and the UP rail line is also a part of this action. The proposed Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Facility (CVEF) on SR-118 could also increase mobility. The facility is used for enforcement, but if it reduces the use of inefficient roads it could also improve mobility. The benefits of reducing the truck volumes on these roads would have at least the same impacts as grade separating railroad crossings.

**Action Set 3: Improve Operational Efficiency** addresses the following action categories:

- ◆ Improve marine terminal productivity, truck turn times, and intermodal operations
- ◆ Improve highway operations through the use of new technology

These improvements would make the most of existing infrastructure. Port and rail intermodal access at Hueneme Port will improve operational efficiency. Expansion of the port with cooperation from the naval base would also improve operational efficiency.

**Action Set 4: Develop Equitable Public/Private Funding Strategy** recognizes that implementation of the actions, projects, and programs with mitigations will require a coordinated effort by private and public sectors. The action set seeks to achieve the following:

- ◆ Maximize the Study Area's Fair Share of State and Federal Funds
- ◆ Identify Opportunities for Project-Specific User Needs
- ◆ Establish Institutional Structure for Managing User Fees and Revenues
- ◆ Initiate Supportive Legislation

Ventura County should continue to express interest in partnering with the private sector to help fund rail improvements. The county also needs to maintain and recognize relationships with other MCGMAP agencies that have a role in the regional movement of goods. In order for the port to expand, it would need to reach agreements with the adjacent naval base. The potential of partnership with the adjacent naval base would also influence goods movement.

All the projects in the county ultimately are designed to insure that Southern California maintains, if not enhances, its economic position. Maintenance of the regions economic vitality will be enhanced by the actions being done in Ventura County.